

Who Was Bernard Gilpin?

Many people may not have heard of Bernard Gilpin but not only is this school named after him, but the flag of Houghton le Spring displays his family crest. So, who was this important person?

Bernard Gilpin was born in a small town called Kentmere in the Lake District. He studied at Oxford and earned three Degrees so he must have been very clever! He was a very considerate man who decided to become a vicar. He moved to Houghton le Spring and became the rector of Saint Michael and All Angels church in 1557.



The people of Houghton le Spring adored Bernard Gilpin because he put the feelings of others before those of his own. Every Sunday he set up tables of food and roasted an ox for the people of the town. Because of this he was named "Father of the Poor". He also founded a school for boys in Houghton le Spring. Another one of his nicknames was "Apostle of the North" because he travelled all around the north preaching about Jesus.

However, not everyone liked Bernard Gilpin. Queen Mary was a Catholic but Bernard Gilpin was a Protestant. She decided to send for him to come to London to be burned at the stake. For most people that would be terrible. However, an extremely lucky thing happened on the journey to London. Bernard Gilpin broke his leg and by the time it had healed Queen Mary had died. Her sister, Queen Elizabeth the First became queen. She was a Protestant and liked Bernard Gilpin. She sent him home and so his life was saved.

Bernard Gilpin died aged 66. He was knocked over in Durham market place and died shortly afterwards in Houghton le Spring. He is buried in Saint Michael's church.

Today we remember Bernard Gilpin in October during Houghton Feast. An ox is roasted and everyone has lots of fun! The Bernard Gilpin tree is near the Council Offices in Houghton le Spring.

We are proud that our school is named after such a kind and generous person.

By Year 3 and 4 Literacy Group but in particular Stephanie and Emily.